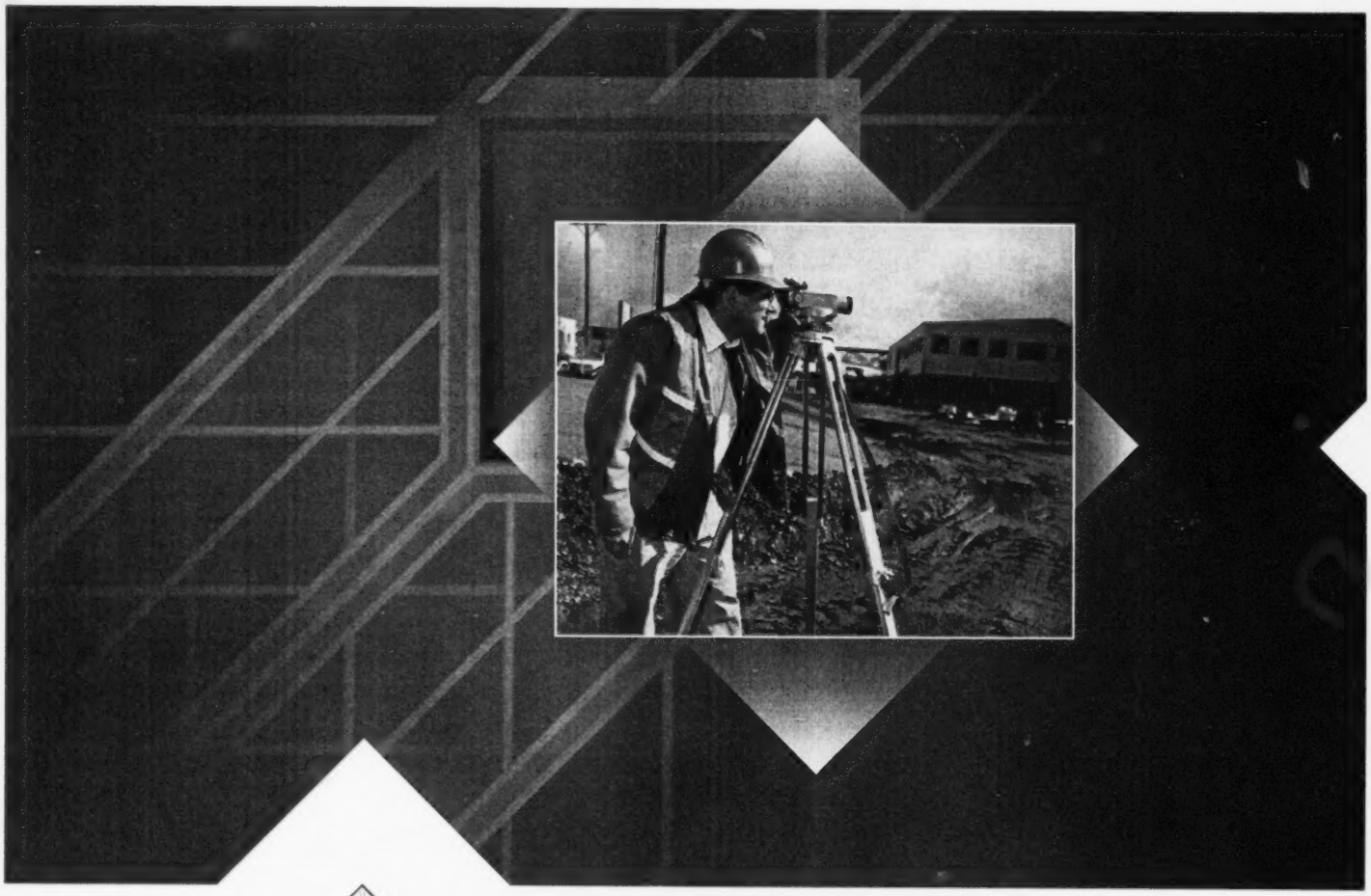
A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Construction Industry



Building and Educating
Tomorrow's Workforce

Alberta's 10 Year Strategy

FOREWORD

A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Construction Industry was developed by construction sector stakeholders with support from the Alberta government. Representatives were involved in a series of meetings held in 2006 and early 2007, and the feedback from these sessions formed this strategy document. Individual associations have self-identified the actions they support and to which they will contribute with projects and initiatives.

The following organizations contributed to the development of this workforce strategy:

- Alberta Building Trades Council of Unions
- Alberta Construction Association
- Alberta Construction Safety Association
- Alberta Federation of Labour
- Alberta Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association
- Boilermaker Contractors' Association
- Canadian Home Builders' Association - Alberta
- Centre for Excellence in Home Building and Land Development
- Chemco Electrical Contractors Ltd.
- Churchill Corporation
- Christian Labour Association of Canada
- Clark Builders
- Construction Labour Relations - Alberta
- Construction Owners Association of Alberta
- Construction Sector Council
- Edmonton Construction Association
- Electrical Contractors Association of Alberta
- Industrial Contractors Association
- Kiewet Energy Canada Corp.
- Ledcor Industrial
- Merit Contractors Association
- PCL Constructors Inc.
- Progressive Contractors Association of Canada
- Women Building Futures

BACKGROUND

Alberta is a leader in economic growth in Canada and the world. However, Alberta is faced with labour and skill shortages, which if not addressed, will constrain continued economic growth and prosperity.

Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce (BETW) is Alberta's 10-year labour force development strategy. This strategy identifies 17 government-led priority actions to ensure Alberta has more workers, better-trained people and innovative workplaces. These government actions address labour force issues across several industry sectors.

Meeting Alberta's labour force challenges over the next decade requires the participation and involvement of all stakeholders. Cooperation and ongoing partnership between government and various stakeholder groups is key to successful implementation of the BETW strategy. Stakeholders include industry, labour groups, professional organizations, volunteer and community agencies, education and training providers, Aboriginal groups and where appropriate, other orders of government.

INDUSTRY WORKFORCE STRATEGIES

Industry is committed to playing a lead role over the next 10 years in building and educating their workforce. Each industry sector will need their own actions and initiatives to address their unique economic pressures and challenges. The Alberta government is working together with stakeholders to facilitate the development of industry-specific workforce strategies. These workforce strategies provide industry associations and employers with the foundation necessary to identify projects and initiatives to build a strong, viable workforce. The workforce strategy is a means to frame discussion, provide direction for action, coordinate activities and avoid duplication of efforts in the industry. For industries, such as construction, the workforce strategy may complement and enhance existing projects and actions already underway.

Due to the severity of labour and skill shortages in the construction sector, the industry is very progressive in developing initiatives to address its workforce issues. The sector has been providing strong support and feedback to Alberta Advanced Education and Technology's (AET) Apprenticeship and Industry Training Division enabling government to expand training in the construction trades. This partnership between the sectors and AET continues to be strong and enabling.

Each industry sector needs to be aware of activity in other interdependent sectors. For example, increased activity in the energy sector may create increased activity in industrial construction. The construction industry may also be impacted by activity and conditions in the manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and forestry and logging sectors. Expansion or contraction in any sector impacts the other sectors, both in terms of demand for goods and services, and competition for labour. In developing workforce strategies to address their labour force, industries need to take into account these interdependent relationships.

Since the workforce strategy is a framework to help industry identify actions and initiatives, industry may choose to enhance, add or delete some of the priority actions listed in the document. Different industry associations are identified as being a contributor to a specific priority action. The Alberta government's role will be to facilitate and enable industry in the implementation of their workforce strategy.

High levels of co-operation among stakeholders within an industry will be required for successful implementation of their workforce strategies. Creative solutions and a synergistic approach to implementing initiatives work best when stakeholders come together to work in partnership. Government assists in bringing stakeholders together, including those from other industries, to work on common projects and initiatives.

A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Construction Industry is this industry's commitment to play a lead role in building and educating their workforce over the next decade.

PROFILE OF ALBERTA'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Industry Definition

The four categories of construction work, as defined by the Construction Sector Council of Canada are:

- New Home Building and Renovation: the construction, remodelling and/or renovation of single-family and multi-family residential buildings;
- Heavy Industrial: the construction of large industrial projects such as oil refineries, petrochemical plants and power plants;
- Institutional and Commercial: the construction of commercial (i.e. strip malls, shopping centres, office buildings) and institutional buildings (i.e. schools, hospitals) and related structures such as stadiums, grain elevators and indoor swimming pools; and
- Civil Engineering: the construction of entire engineering projects such as highways, dams, water and sewer lines, and bridges.

Importance to the Provincial Economy

Alberta's construction industry is the fourth largest industry in the province in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) contribution. In 2005, the industry accounted for 8.7 per cent of Alberta's GDP or $18.1 billion.[1] The industry has benefited from robust oil and gas activity in the province in recent years. Alberta's construction capital expenditures related to mining and oil and gas extraction rose from $13.3 billion in 2002 to $33.1 billion in 2006[2], an increase of approximately 150 per cent. These projects have spawned other construction activity including infrastructure and residential construction projects.

[1] Alberta Finance, 2006
[2] Statistics Canada, 2007

Employment

The construction industry is Alberta's third largest industry in terms of employment. Approximately 172,600 people or 9.2 per cent of Alberta's labour force[3] were employed in the industry in 2006. Significantly more men than women work in the industry. In 2006, men accounted for approximately 86 per cent of Alberta's construction workforce.[4] The same year, men comprised 55 per cent of the total provincial labour force.[5] While there is a wide range of salary levels within the industry, the average hourly wage of $20.95 is slightly higher, approximately six per cent[6] higher, than the average across all industries.

Unemployment in Alberta's construction industry is relatively low: 4.4 per cent in 2006.[7] This unemployment rate is likely the lowest, or very nearly the lowest ever in this industry. The high level of investment in construction projects in the energy sector and Alberta's robust housing market have led to shortages of skilled workers, particularly during peak periods and in remote geographic areas.

Many of those working in the construction industry are trained through Alberta's apprenticeship system. Alberta trains about 20 per cent of Canada's skilled tradespeople and over 33 per cent of Red Seal certified journeypersons qualified to work in their trades across Canada.[8] Participation in apprenticeship training is rising in Alberta: the number of registered apprentices increased from 24,836 in 1996 to 60,983 in 2006.[9] Yet even with this increase there remains a shortage of qualified tradespeople in occupations such as welders, boilermakers and pipefitters.

OUTLOOK

Alberta's economy, fuelled by the $172.5 billion (as of May 2007) investment in major projects progressing or recently announced, is expected to grow 3.6 per cent annually from 2007-2012. It is anticipated that 297,000 jobs will be created over the same time period.[10] As a result, Alberta's construction industry is expected to grow on average 5.2 per cent annually from 2006 to 2011.[11] This will mean an increase of over 50,000 jobs to reach 222,649 by 2011.[12] This represents 21.2 per cent of all new jobs expected to be created in Alberta between 2006 and 2011.[13] Shortages of skilled labour are expected during peak periods and in high growth areas, such as Fort McMurray, Calgary, Edmonton and Grande Prairie. Continued investment in Alberta's oil sands has the greatest impact on non-residential construction. However, this creates ripple effects in the other sub-sectors of the construction industry.

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[3] *2006 Annual Alberta Labour Market Review*, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry
[4] *Labour Force Survey*, Statistics Canada, 2006
[5] *Ibid*
[6] *Ibid*
[7] *2006 Annual Alberta Labour Market Review*, Alberta Employment Immigration and Industry
[8] *Let's Get to Work*, Merit Contractor's Association and Progressive Contractors Association of Canada, 2005
[9] The data reflects the total number of apprentices registered in Alberta on December 31 in each year. Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2007
[10] Information from *Inventory of Alberta Major Projects*, Alberta Economic Development, May 2007, and Consensus Forecast 2007: major banks, Conference Board of Canada and Global Insight
[11] Tight gas refers to low-grade gas deposits held in impermeable formations. *The Decade Ahead, Petroleum Human Alberta Modified Canadian Occupational Projections System (COPS) Outlook – Industries (2006-2011)*, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, 2006
[12] *Ibid*
[13] *Ibid*

According to the Construction Sector Council forecast[14], 2006-2008 will be a peak employment period for Alberta's construction industry. Employment in the residential construction sub-sector is expected to peak in 2006 and subsequently taper off to 2002 levels by 2014. Employment in the non-residential sub-sector is expected to reach its peak in 2008 and to remain above 2007 levels for the rest of the forecast period.

There are significant challenges associated with construction labour force forecasts in an economy as dynamic as Alberta's. Labour mobility between construction sub-sectors, for example residential and non-residential components, and other industries such as manufacturing and energy will depend on the level of transferable skills of individual workers, their ability to upgrade qualifications if required, and their willingness to move to the locations of the jobs.

The construction industry is in itself extremely dynamic. It may dramatically shift from a shortage of labour with specific skills such as insulators, electricians or pipefitters to a surplus situation for these workers when that portion of a project or projects requiring these skills is completed. A shortage may also quickly arise when a number of projects are at a point where they require the same skilled workers at their site.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

Alberta's rapidly expanding economy has resulted in many employers encountering a persistent and pervasive shortage of construction workers. As a result, the industry is facing a number of significant challenges. These include:

- **Increased competition for labour.** Alberta's tight labour market has led to intensified competition for workers within and among industries. This increased competition is also occurring nationally and globally within the construction industry.

  The construction industry has historically relied on a mobile labour force from other parts of the country to meet cyclical demands for labour. Initiatives such as the Inter-provincial Standards (Red Seal) Program and the Alberta-British Columbia Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement are intended to support inter-provincial mobility of skilled workers needed in the industry. However, the ability of Alberta companies to attract out-of-province workers is influenced by construction activity elsewhere in the country. In particular, Alberta must compete with British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba for labour. All three provinces are expected to have high levels of construction activity over the next 10 years. British Columbia is projected to have significant infrastructure development, driven by the needs of the 2010 Olympics and the further development of the Port of Prince Rupert. In addition to high levels of infrastructure development, the other western provinces are forecast to have significant development and construction activity related to growth in the mining sector. Manitoba, specifically, is undertaking an expansion of its hydroelectric generating capacity. All this activity will greatly increase the competition for skilled workers from within western Canada as well for those from other parts of the country.

[14] *Construction Looking Forward: Labour requirements from 2006 to 2014 for Alberta,* Construction Sector Council, 2006

In response to the increased competition for labour within Canada, Alberta construction firms are recruiting out-of-country for workers. Alberta firms are competing for these workers with Canadian companies from other provinces as well as with countries that have less complex immigration requirements and fewer credential recognition impediments.

- **Changing demographics.** Alberta's labour force is aging. Over the next five years, the number of Albertans over the age of 45 will grow twice as fast as those under 45 years of age, with the fastest growth occurring in the 55 to 64 age group.[15]

  A significant number of workers in the construction industry will retire in the next 10 years, especially those employed in specialized trades. From 2006 to 2014, Alberta will have to replace an estimated 16 per cent of its construction workforce to maintain 2004 labour force levels.[16] Finding skilled workers from other industries and other regions of Canada will be a challenge. There are opportunities, however, to draw more people from groups currently under-represented in the construction labour force (i.e. women, underemployed Albertans, Aboriginal peoples, mature workers, etc.).

- **Need for supervisory training.** The expansion of Alberta's construction workforce in recent years and the retirement of many experienced supervisors have increased the need to develop more trained supervisors. As well, increasing supervisory training in Alberta's construction industry is necessary to ensure knowledge is transferred within companies, businesses and organizations within the sector.

- **Increasing number of inexperienced workers.** With increased activity in Alberta's construction industry, a large number of inexperienced workers are being drawn into the industry. It is important employers have a continued commitment to ongoing workplace health and safety training as well as other skills training to minimize safety related worksite accidents.

- **Strengthening apprenticeship training.** The construction industry's most significant labour need is registered apprentices and qualified journeypersons. Feedback from employers indicates that a large proportion have encountered significant difficulties in finding the required numbers of suitably skilled workers. Although the number of registered apprentices in Alberta has been increasing, hiring difficulties remain. This has resulted in calls for greater employer commitment to apprenticeship training and for improved apprenticeship completion rates to deal with skilled labour shortages.[17,18]

  Available data indicates small and medium enterprises are significantly involved in apprenticeship training. Alberta Advanced Education and Technology (January 2006) provided information showing 39 per cent of apprentices were being trained in firms of 10 employees or less and 72 per cent were being trained by employers who have 50 or fewer employees.

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[15] *Alberta Regional Population Outlook, 2006-2011*, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, August 2006
[16] *Construction Looking Forward: Labour requirements from 2006 to 2014 for Alberta*, Construction Sector Council, 2006
[17] *Beyond Chicken Little: Understanding the need for measured reforms to Alberta's system for skills training*, Alberta Federation of Labour, 2006
[18] *Craft Labour Shortages – Alberta's Achilles Heel: A Discussion Paper*, Terry Burton

The Statistics Canada research study, *Registered Apprentices: The Class of 1992, A Decade Later*, identified that a high proportion of apprentices do not complete their training because of challenges related to securing employment necessary to continue their apprenticeship training. One industry study indicates that of the 20,000 trades employers in Alberta, only 11,000 hire apprentices.[19] Of those that do hire apprentices, many prefer to hire apprentices after they have completed their first two periods of training. Many smaller firms, which account for about 45 per cent of the construction businesses in Alberta[20], have said they find it difficult to provide continuous employment throughout an apprentice's full training period of four years.

There are a number of other factors that have been identified as constraining the supply of apprentices. Many employers have indicated a difficulty in finding apprenticeship candidates with the necessary academic skills and motivation to successfully complete the program. It is also suggested that many suitable candidates are reluctant to enter apprenticeship programs due to perceptions related to the quality of life in terms of having to work in unfavourable conditions and away from one's home. Many in the construction sector see pre-apprenticeship programming as extremely valuable in overcoming some of these barriers and developing suitable apprenticeship candidates.

The cost of apprenticeship classroom training (i.e. training fees, living expenses, and foregone income) can also hinder some apprentices in the completion of their apprenticeship programs. As well, the urgent need for construction workers in the province may prevent some apprentices from leaving their jobs to take their required classroom training. To help overcome these barriers, creative ways of providing classroom training such as distance learning, is in some instances being implemented.

- **Productivity and project management capacity.** Construction companies in Alberta are exploring and applying innovative ways to increase productivity (i.e. adopting new technologies, lean enterprise practices, etc.) and the industry has recognized the need for improved project management capacity. While project management expertise is certainly required for the successful completion of all construction projects, Alberta's mega oil sands projects require an exceptionally high level of project management expertise.

  The industry is seeking ways to control construction costs by optimizing the scheduling of manpower, materials, and equipment; limiting the amount of rework; building projects in modules, closer to labour supply, etc. This is necessary in order to stay competitive in the global marketplace.

  Two additional issues related to productivity being discussed within the industry are work scheduling (the ability of the employer to set hours of work and periods of rest) and scope of practice (the duties and responsibilities of construction workers in various trades).

  Improved productivity and enhanced project management capacity are critical to the industry. With a tight labour supply one of the solutions necessary is to "work better".

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[19] *COAA On Labour Shortages,* Canadian Constriction Owners Association of Alberta, 2005

[20] Over 44 per cent of Alberta construction businesses employ less than 20 people. *Construction Industry, Industry Profile,* Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2006

- **Improving work-life balance.** Opportunities for work-life balance are of increasing importance to workers in selecting a career or choosing to remain in jobs. Many construction jobs have demanding work schedules with long hours and few days of rest or require extended periods of time in remote areas, far from family and friends. These factors, coupled with availability of well-paying jobs in other Alberta industries at this time reduce the appeal of construction work.

- **Employee retention.** A large proportion of Alberta's major construction projects over the next five to 10 years will be in communities outside major urban centres. The companies building these projects face challenges retaining workers because of the reluctance of many workers to live in camps and to be away from home for extended periods. More can be done to improve the working and living conditions of construction workers on these projects, including improving infrastructure and housing to increase the size of the labour force in northern Alberta.

  The residential construction segment of the industry is also plagued with worker retention issues[21] for different reasons. This segment employs a high proportion of lower and semi-skilled workers who can be easily attracted to other jobs offering higher pay or more attractive working conditions.

- **High proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).** Labour and skill shortages pose a greater challenge for SMEs. About 80 per cent of Alberta's construction businesses have fewer than 100 employees and 45 per cent employ fewer than 20 people.[22] According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, an organization representing small business, 98 per cent of Alberta's construction companies experienced hiring difficulties in the past three years.[23] Companies tend to overcome hiring difficulties by not pursuing new business opportunities or by increasing the responsibilities of existing staff. Training and technology adoption often fall behind when companies are struggling to complete projects in a tight labour market.

[21] A survey conducted by the Centre for Excellence in Home Building and Land Development found the residential construction segment may lose as many as 75 per cent of new workers within the first year of employment. *Labour and Human Resource Working Paper for the Alberta Residential Construction Industry,* Canadian Home Builders Association – Alberta, April 2006

[22] *Construction Industry, Industry Profile,* Alberta Human Resources and Employment, March 2006

[23] *Shortage of Qualified Labour Survey,* Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, August 2005

INDUSTRY PRIORITY ACTIONS

Industry has lead responsibility for implementing the priority actions in the construction workforce strategy. Industry associations and labour groups are best positioned to implement the priority actions to address the labour force issues and challenges experienced by their industry. The activities identified in this workforce strategy will be implemented over a five to 10 year period. The following lead organizations have agreed to contribute to one or more priority actions:

Alberta Building Trades Council of Unions (ABTC)

Alberta Construction Association (ACA)

Alberta Construction Safety Association (ACSA)

Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL)

Alberta Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association (ARHCA)

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF)

Canadian Home Builders' Association – Alberta (CHBA-A)

Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC)

Construction Labour Relations - Alberta (CLR)

Construction Owners Association of Alberta (COAA)

Construction Sector Council (CSC)

Edmonton Construction Association (ECA)

Electrical Contractors Association of Alberta (ECAA)

Merit Contractors Association (Merit)

Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCAC)

Union Training Trust Funds (UTTF)

INFORM

Information sharing will play a vital role in addressing labour force pressures in Alberta's construction industry. The Inform theme focuses on increased access to information to support informed decision-making on the part of employers, workers, youth entering the workforce, and individuals considering employment in Alberta's construction industry.

1.1 Continue to inform Albertans about the:

- importance of the overall economic growth of Alberta's construction industry and its segments (i.e. residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial);
- industry's labour force challenges, and
- rationale for actions being taken to address labour needs.

ACA, CHBA-A, CSC, ECA, Merit

1.2 Develop more detailed labour forecasts for individual industry segments and disseminate this information to assist in labour force planning.

ACA, CHBA-A, CLR, COAA, CSC

1.3 Create an inventory of existing career information and promotional resources that encourage Albertans to pursue training and employment in construction-related fields (i.e. Career Pathways, Trade Up, Skills Canada, CAREERS – the Next Generation, etc.). Use these resources as part of integrated industry promotional initiatives targeted at the potential employee groups.

ARHCA, CHBA-A, COAA, Merit, PCAC

1.4 Develop career promotional campaigns targeted at youth (including recent high school graduates and aboriginal youth) and career influencers such as parents and career counsellors to increase awareness of construction career opportunities and to counter negative perceptions about construction as a career.

CHBA-A, COAA, CSC, ECA, Merit, PCAC, UTTF

1.5 Expand opportunities for students to get exposure to and gain work experience in Alberta's construction industry and become familiar with the nature of construction work (i.e. high school vocational training, post-secondary co-op placements, internships, high school work experience placements, WorldSkills, etc.).

ACA, AHRCA, CHBA-A, Merit, PCAC

1.6 Develop a promotional campaign targeted at underemployed Albertans who might be amenable to changing careers and working in the construction trades.

CLAC, ECAA, Merit

1.7 Increase the sharing of information about effective worker attraction, development and retention practices among businesses in Alberta's construction industry.

CHBA-A, Merit

1.8 Increase awareness of existing resources to support human resource decision-making on the part of employers within the construction industry (i.e. Construction Owners Handbook).

ACA, CHBA-A, ECA, Merit

1.9 Inform potential and new apprentices of available funding options and effective practices for handling personal finances during apprenticeship training.

CHBA-A, CLAC, UTTF

1.10 Continue to develop an apprenticeship/employer referral system to assist apprentices looking for training opportunities.

ABTC, CHBA-A, CLAC, Merit, PCAC

1.11 Create an inventory of current construction workforce related programs and services, and effective practices to help employers address labour force issues

CHBA-A

1.12 Develop an industry recognition program to reward employers who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to apprenticeship training.

COAA, ECA, Merit

1.13 Develop and distribute information resources on effective practices for apprenticeship utilization, available supports for apprentices and workforce scheduling to accommodate apprentice attendance at training courses.

CHBA-A, COAA, Merit

ATTRACT

This theme relates to attracting workers from outside Alberta and Canada to meet some of the demand for labour in Alberta's construction industry. *

2.1 Increase sharing of information about effective approaches for identifying pools of potential workers elsewhere in Canada and internationally, and for bringing these workers to Alberta.

CHBA-A, CSC, Merit

2.2 Advocate with the federal government to modify and streamline immigration programs to make them more responsive to the labour and skills shortages faced by employers in Alberta's construction industry.

ABTC, ACA, CHBA-A, ECA, Merit, PCAC

2.3 Advocate for more emphasis on trade skills in Canada's immigration policies and to streamline processes (i.e. immigration and temporary foreign worker) for bringing in workers from other countries when shortages of workers with specific trades skills are widely recognized.

ABTC, ACA, CHBA-A, CSC, ECA, Merit

2.4 Continue to advocate for improved processes for credential and competency recognition for out-of-province and out-of-country workers seeking employment in Alberta's construction industry to improve labour mobility (i.e. expansion of overseas foreign credential recognition, development and expanded use of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition).

ACA, CHBA-A, CSC, Merit, PCAC

2.5 Advocate with the federal government to modify the Employment Insurance (EI) program to provide assistance to EI clients residing in areas of high unemployment to move to Alberta for jobs (i.e. travel expenses, resettlement support, tool expenses).

ABTC, ACA, CHBA-A

2.6 Work with stakeholders (i.e. major employers, municipal and provincial governments) to develop regional labour attraction and retention strategies.

ABTC, ARHCA, CHBA-A, Merit

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* *Priority actions related to the attraction of Temporary Foreign Workers are opposed by the Alberta Federation of Labour.*

DEVELOP A HIGH PERFORMANCE WORKFORCE

The Develop theme has two components. The first focuses on building Alberta's construction workforce through education and training.

3.1 Support training (i.e. pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship training) aimed at increasing the participation of under-represented groups in Alberta's construction industry (i.e. Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, Albertans with disabilities, underemployed persons and women) and encourage the incorporation of generic safety training in these programs.

ABTC, CHBA-A, CLAC, COAA, CSC, ECAA, Merit

3.2 Partner with educational institutions and government to expand and improve access to pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship training opportunities and provide support to those individuals interested in the construction trades.

ABTC, ACA, CHBA-A, ECAA, Merit

3.3 Advocate with Alberta Education for expansion and strengthening of vocational training programs in high schools to expose youth to construction trades and help youth develop relevant industry skills.

ACA, CHBA-A, CLAC, COAA, Merit

3.4 Encourage more employers in the construction industry to provide apprenticeship-training opportunities and support apprentices in completing their programs (i.e. business case illustrating the return on investment for hiring and training apprentices).

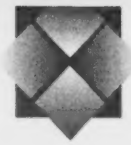
ABTC, CAF, CHBA-A, COAA, Merit

3.5 Encourage more employers to hire first and second period apprentices.

ABTC, CHBA-A, CLAC, COAA, Merit

3.6 Encourage employers to support apprentices in completing their apprenticeship training. Develop and distribute information resources on effective practices for apprenticeship utilization, available supports for apprentices, and workforce scheduling to accommodate apprentices' attendance at training courses.

ABTC, AFL, CHBA-A, CLAC, COAA, Merit



3.7 Develop strategies and initiatives to improve apprenticeship completion for trades forecasted to have shortages. Initiatives would target both employers (i.e. business case for return on investment) and apprentices (i.e. information on available financial supports, employment referral system, etc.).

CAF, CHBA-A, Merit

3.8 Develop a proposal for increased government incentives to support employee training, including apprenticeship training (i.e. training and development grants, training tax credits, etc.).

ABTC, ACA, CHBA-A, ECA

3.9 Support and encourage innovative delivery approaches (i.e. evening, weekend, on the job site or via video conference, e-learning, etc.) for industry training.

ABTC, CHBA-A, CLAC, CSC, ECA

3.10 Develop industry strategies to encourage employers and employees to support increased participation in supervisory training programs (i.e. industry-recognized accreditation).

CHBA-A, CLAC, CSC, Merit, PCAC

DEVELOP A HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The second component of the Develop theme relates to developing high performance work environments in Alberta's construction industry. This includes improving workplaces and work arrangements, increasing capital investment and technology adoption, and improving business processes.

3.11 Increase support for applied research related to new construction technologies and innovative construction practices to improve construction industry productivity.

ACA, CHBA-A, COAA, CSC

3.12 Continue to promote the adoption of new technologies and innovative business practices to improve labour productivity in Alberta's construction industry (i.e. project management, lean enterprise practices, human resource management, etc.).

ARHCA, CHBA-A, CLAC, ECA, Merit

3.13 Promote fabrication and modularization to improve access to skilled workers and achieve efficiencies in construction processes.

ABTC, CHBA-A, COAA

3.14 Continue efforts to promote best workplace health and safety practices and to identify new approaches to further reduce work-related injuries in the construction industry.

ACA, ACSA, ARHCA, CHBA-A, COAA, CSC, Merit

RETAIN

The Retain theme relates to enhancing the attractiveness of working in Alberta's construction industry so that workers, including mature workers, immigrants, Aboriginal Albertans and those who may experience difficulty maintaining employment, remain engaged in the industry.

4.1 Identify and encourage the application of policies and practices to create welcoming work environments for a more diverse labour force in the construction industry (i.e. mature workers, Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, women, persons with disabilities).

ACA, CHBA-A, CLAC, COAA, CSC, Merit, PCAC

4.2 Encourage employers to provide workplace diversity training to supervisors and other employees so they are more aware and supportive of the needs of under-represented groups in the construction workforce (i.e. women, Aboriginal people).

COAA, CSC

4.3 Encourage employers to adopt progressive employment practices that support the continued contribution of mature workers in the industry (i.e. part-time or flexible work arrangements, phased retirement, mature workers engaged in mentoring and training, etc.) to ensure the retention of technical and corporate knowledge in Alberta's construction industry.

CHBA-A, COAA

4.4 Develop mentoring programs to support women, Aboriginal peoples and other under-represented groups in the construction industry.

ABTC, CHBA-A, COAA, CSC, Merit, PCAC

4.5 Develop strategies and additional supports for apprentices to complete their apprenticeship training. Identify and encourage the application of best practices in apprentice training and support to improve retention.

ABTC, CHBA-A, CLAC, COAA, CSC, Merit

4.6 Identify and promote strategies to improve work-life balance for workers in Alberta's construction industry and make employment in the industry more attractive to potential and existing workers.

CLAC

4.7 Work with other stakeholders to address barriers to the development of a sustainable labour force (i.e. access to affordable housing, infrastructure expansion).

ABTC, ACA, CSC

MOVING FORWARD

Industry will lead the implementation of priority actions identified in A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Construction Industry. Some of the ongoing challenges faced by industry leads may include:

- obtaining active involvement of industry members and other stakeholders;
- involving key stakeholders (i.e. associations, labour groups, governments) within and across industries;
- eliminating fragmentation and duplication of initiatives within and across industries;
- selecting the actions and initiatives with the greatest impact to work on first;
- identifying gaps in the priority actions in order to address both current and evolving needs, and
- ensuring sustainability of the workforce strategy over the next decade.

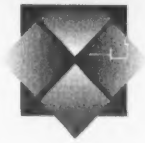
Industry associations and labour groups will continue to work with their members to identify projects and initiatives to support their priority actions found in this workforce strategy. Government will work with these organizations in a supportive, facilitating and enabling role, to implement identified priority actions. This will include working with the various organizations to identify those situations where it is more efficient and effective, within an industry and across industries, to work together on similar projects. Government will facilitate bringing the parties together and at times may support the sector in building capacity. When appropriate, government has the capacity to partner with stakeholders to support labour force development initiatives and training projects.

The construction industry will determine the success of their actions based on the following outcomes, including:

- stronger cooperation between industry stakeholders and ongoing sharing of best practices;
- youth continuing to choose careers in the construction sector;
- youth completing their apprenticeships;
- employers embracing technology adoption and innovative construction practices;
- continuing decline of work-related injuries, and
- under-represented groups, such as women, immigrants and Aboriginal people are proportionally represented on construction worksites.

Industry will work with government to monitor success over the next 10 years. Lead organizations are asked to report on their progress by sharing their achievements and best practices. By working together, government and industry can continue to build a strong and prosperous Alberta where all industries benefit.

Notes



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